THE LIFE OF BROTHER LAWRENCE

SEPTIMUS HEBERT

FOREWORD BY THE
BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

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THE LIFE OF BROTHER LAWRENCE

"The time of business does not with me differ
from the time of prayer."

THE LIFE OF BROTHER LAWRENCE

A PLEA FOR THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD IN THESE DAYS

BY THE
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WITH FOREWORD
BY THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

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FOREWORD.

I COUNT it a privilege to be allowed the opportunity of writing a few lines of introduction to this helpful little memoir, the work of one of the clergy in my diocese. I am convinced that Mr. Hebert is right in supposing that many English readers will welcome this account of Brother Lawrence's life and character, published for the first time in its completeness in the English language, and will be drawn thereby to a closer study of the Practice of the Presence of God set out in the Conversations, Letters, and Spiritual Maxims. The incidents in Brother Lawrence's life were not eventful; but this fact only serves to prove that the Practice of the Presence of God is possible under the ordinary conditions of everyday experience, and that the simplest and homeliest duties can be transfigured and glorified, if carried out as in God's sight and as the offering of loving service to Him. Miss

Underhill in her book on Mysticism draws attention to the "quietistic trend of seventeenth century mysticism," which in France produced such striking and diverse characters as S. Francis de Sales, Pascal, and Brother Lawrence. As one of these three saintly men, Brother Lawrence "shows the passive tendency of French mysticism in its most sane, well-balanced form. He was the humble empiricist, laying claim to no special gifts"; yet we see in his writings "beautiful expressions of the first form of illuminated consciousness, that joyous apprehension of the Absolute" to which the well-known title of his writings has given the name. Surely to-day we need especially to live in the Presence of God, amid the distractions and interruptions of our busy lives, often strained nearly to breaking point with daily cares and sudden tragedies. And, as Mr. Hebert shows convincingly in his closing chapters, this realization of God's loving concern and personal guidance ought to bring into spiritual harmony with one another all who are endeavouring to serve Him faithfully. For it is the common heritage and possession of the truest saints in every age and in every school of religious thought.

J. R. Roffen.

PREFACE.

I HAVE ventured to draw a rough sketch of the life of Brother Lawrence, as I cannot find at the British Museum that this has ever been done in English, and only a short summary given in French by Madame de Guyon in her "Elogé ou abregé de la vie de Frère Laurent de la Résurrection," published in Cologne in 1699.

We know that Brother Lawrence died in 1691. It appears that a year later Mr. Beaufort, Grand Vicar to the Cardinal de Noailles, wrote out and published his Conversations and Letters.

In 1694 he further brought out a sketch of his character with an account of his death. Probably also the Spiritual Maxims were included in the same volume.

In 1699 Madame de Guyon, in her "Treatise on Quietism," devotes half the book to Brother Lawrence, giving us, along with her summary of his life, a new edition of the

Character, together with the Conversations and Letters, and the Spiritual Maxims, and finally his Practice of the Presence of God, taken from the Letters.

In 1741 an English translation of the Conversations and Letters together with the Spiritual Maxims was published at Edinburgh. In later years since 1823 various English publishers have brought out translations of the Conversations and Letters, and a few have ventured on the Character and Spiritual Maxims.

But, as I say, I can find no Life of the good lay brother in English. This I have attempted to give, together with a Chronology of the Life, based on the above sources of information that have come down to us.

I think the Life is of such importance that no apology is needed for attempting to sketch it in English. I have simply added a plea for the Practice as especially needed in these critical days through which we are passing.

I have to thank the following authors and publishers for permission to quote, as follows:

Messrs. Methuen & Co., for Metrical Version of Psalm cxxxix., from the late Dean Beeching's "Lyra Sacra."

Messrs. Mowbray & Co., for a "Reflection" out of their book, "Letters and Reflections of Fénelon."

The Editor of the "Spectator" for a poem, "Christ in Flanders," which first appeared in the "Spectator" for September 11th, 1915.

The Oxford University Press and Herbert Paul, Esq., for the poem, "Come to Me, Beloved," from the poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben, edited by Robert Bridges, Esq.

I have to apologize to Richard le Gallienne for quoting his beautiful poem "The Second Crucifixion"; but I wrote more than three months ago to an address in New York which I was told would find him, and have received no reply.

SEPTIMUS HEBERT.

Seal Vicarage,
April, 1919.

SUGGESTED CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF BROTHER LAWRENCE

Worked out from a Study of the Conversations, Letters, and Character Sketch, compared with the Short Summary of his life by Madame de Guyon.

CHRONOLOGY.

1611	Birth in Lorraine.
1629	Winter. Conversion. Age 18.
1629–51	Life as a Soldier, then Footman, altogether twenty-two years.
1640	About this time commences Practice of Presence of God. Age 29. Ten years of struggle and difficulty. Last four of these years considers himself a lost soul.
1650	About this time comes out into inward settled peace and joy.
1651	Becomes Lay-brother in Community of Barefooted Carmelites in Paris. Age 40.
1651–81	Thirty years as Cook in the Community.
1665	Autumn. Sent into Auvergne to buy wine.
1666	Autumn. Sent into Burgundy on same business.

1666	August 3. First Conversation with Mr. Beaufort. Age 55.
	September 28. Second Conversation with Mr. Beaufort.
	November 22. Third Conversation with Mr. Beaufort.
1667	November 25. Fourth Conversation with Mr. Beaufort.
1681	Illness after thirty years as Cook. On recovery given lighter work. Age 70.
1681–91	Last ten years of life. "Spiritual Maxims" written.
1682–91	Twelve Letters to the Reverend Mother.
1688–90	Three Letters to Madame N.
	One undated letter to "My Reverend Father"—possibly Archbishop Fénelon.
	Visited in an illness by Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai.
1690	September. He anticipates, five months beforehand, his death before the end of next February.
	November 17. Letter to Reverend Mother speaks of anticipation of his death, which happened three months later.

1690 Last three months. Frequent illnesses.

1691 February 6. Last letter to Reverend Mother. Anticipates death in a few days' time, which occurred six days later.

February 8. Thursday. Takes to his bed—only four days' illness.

1691 February 12. Monday, 9 a.m. Enters into rest. Age 80.

Life of Brother Lawrence.

FIRST PERIOD, 1611—1651.

CHILDHOOD, YOUTH, AND EARLY MANHOOD AS SOLDIER AND FOOTMAN.

It is rather remarkable that Brother Lawrence's long life of eighty years (1611–1691) should fall into two distinct portions of exactly forty years each—the first comprising his childhood, youth, and early manhood, first as a soldier, and then in service as a footman; the second half being his life as a lay-brother in the monastery of the Barefooted Carmelites in Paris.

In the sketch of his life which I am going to draw you will not find a dreamy and speculative devotion, but one that is thoroughly real and truly human. Nor was it a devotion such as can only be attained in a cloister. The realization of the Presence

of God has been truly and consistently practised by many a man and woman in the larger community of everyday life.

Nicolas Herman, for that was Brother Lawrence's original name, was born in the year 1611, just over three centuries ago, in the French province of Lorraine. Lorraine! What memories the name recalls of the Franco-Prussian War of forty-nine years ago, and of Verdun, celebrated both in that war and more particularly in the far greater war just concluded.

His parents were simple-minded peasants, but lived exemplary lives, teaching him the fear of God in his infancy, and taking particular care of his education, probably under the *curé* of his native village. He passed from early childhood into his teens, and at eighteen a great change came over his life. Something occurred which might be thought a trivial incident, but it was fraught with most important and lasting results in his whole after life. He happened to be looking at a tree in winter time; he noticed the bare boughs, and the thought came that in the spring that tree would be clothed with living foliage. The thought takes hold of him. He thinks of the Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness of a God that can make such a

change in a seemingly dead tree. The thought of that Wisdom, that Power, that Goodness, fills and floods his soul. It is his conversion—a conversion as real and decisive as that of Saul the Pharisee outside the walls of Damascus.

Like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, Nicolas Herman—familiar to us as Brother Lawrence—never goes back upon the vision he had had that day.

Some time after his conversion—we do not know exactly how soon—a war sprung up between France and Germany, and Nicolas enlisted as a soldier, and was taken prisoner. The Germans treated him as a spy, which tried his patience very much. They even threatened to hang him. He professed his innocence, and told them that he regarded death with indifference; upon this the German officers let him go.

After this the Swedes, having made an incursion into Lorraine, attacked the little village of Rambervilliers near Epinal. Nicolas was wounded, and so badly that he was obliged to go home to his parents, who lived not far away. This adventure, Madame de Guyon says, caused him to give up being a soldier, and henceforth he fights in a holier warfare under the standard of Jesus Christ.

We are not told, but it is very probable, that the wound he received was the cause of that lameness which, like Jacob, after Peniel, he suffered from to his dying day, and may have left the weakness that led to that severe ulcer in the leg which was the cause of a very serious illness in later years.

Being now once more in civil life he must needs look about for some employment, and we find him in service as a footman in the family of a certain Monsieur Fieubert, who is spoken of as the treasurer, evidently a gentleman in a good position. His lameness does not seem to have unfitted him for service as a footman. He tells us in one of his letters that after his conversion he had at once resolved to give himself up to God, and for love of Him to renounce all else besides. The years go by, marked with the usual struggles and failures, till at last he comes to see that what helps him most is the effort constantly to realize God's Presence, and to live as in that Presence. When he can realize the Presence he makes progress ; when he loses it he falls back. He resolves to cultivate and persevere in forming this habit of mind.

It seems to have been during these years in service that, at the age of about thirty,

he begins his efforts to form this habit of realizing the Presence of God. For the first ten years of his efforts to form this constant habit, his spiritual life was full of difficulties. It was so hard, and there was no one to advise and help him; still he persevered. When he succeeded in realizing God's Presence, even for a short time, it was so delightful; and when he lost it he was correspondingly cast down. He was also perplexed that in those times of realization of the Presence, God should favour him as He did. Were these delightful times merely self-delusions? Was it not his own presumption that led him to think that he had arrived so easily, and so soon, where others had only attained with difficulty and after long years? He often lost the realization of the Presence, and as often got back into it again.

After six years of these upward struggles, it seems that he had to pass through a more severe test still of his entire devotion of himself to God. It appears that Satan was allowed to tempt him, as he tempted Job; and to sift him as wheat, *with the delusion that he was a lost soul!* Strange as it may seem to us, he remains under this terrible conviction for four long years. It appears

that he really did believe that he was definitely a lost soul; he felt convinced that all the men in the world could not persuade him to the contrary, but he reasoned with himself: "I did not engage in a religious life but for the love of God, and I have endeavoured to act only for Him; whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the love of God. I shall have this good at least, that till death I shall have done all that is in me to love Him." In his grief at this time he often went to a retired place where there was a crucifix erected on a column, where his afflicted soul poured itself out before God, and he besought Him not to leave him to perish since he put his whole trust in Him, and only wished to please Him.

It is clear from the dates of the Conversations and Letters that it was when he was about forty years of age, while he was still in service, and before he entered the monastery, that he came out from under that dark cloud, and his soul became filled with a settled peace and joy which he never again really lost.

Referring to those four terribly dark years Madame de Guyon says: "It is thus that God often tries His true servants before

entrusting them with the inestimable treasures of His Wisdom. It was so with Brother Lawrence. He persevered for ten years, with very little interval of relief, and with no sweetness in prayer. Faith alone sustained him, and his courage never left him. One day he resolved to endure not only all his life but for eternity, if God so ordered it, for he would say: 'It does not matter what I do or what I suffer provided that I live lovingly united to His will, which is my sole business.' This was exactly the disposition that God wished for in order that He might heap His grace upon him; so God opened his eyes suddenly, and he saw a ray of heavenly light, which lit up his soul, driving away all his fears, and ending his troubles, and the favours he received made ample amends to him for all his past afflictions."

Nicolas Herman, having now come out of the experiences of those ten dark years into a settled peace and joy, his life being now entirely devoted to God, and lived constantly in His Presence, was strongly influenced at this time by the life and example of an uncle of his, a very holy man, who was a monk in the Order of Barefooted Carmelites in Paris. The wise advice of this uncle

seems to have helped him very much, and naturally awakened within him the idea of joining the same Order.

It may seem strange to us, but there was another thing that drew him in the same direction. As Nicolas himself tells us, he was an awkward and clumsy fellow—a rough and ungainly peasant. His master probably kept him in his service because he was thoroughly steady and honest and trustworthy; but it seems he was always getting into trouble for breaking things. His master's glass and china seem to have suffered disastrously in his clumsy hands. The same awkward habit is not unknown among our own parlourmaids and housemaids of to-day; but though it does not seem to trouble them very much, it troubled Nicholas a good deal, and somehow, though he was then about forty years of age, well past the hastiness and impetuous movements of early youth, he could not break himself of the habit of breaking his master's things; and so Nicolas finally decides to join the Order in the hope that the restraints and discipline of the monastic life will cure him of his bad habit. So he comes to Paris, and enters the monastery of the Barefooted Carmelites there in the year 1651, at the age of forty, and becomes

a lay-brother in their Order. Probably some other monk of the Order happened to have the name of Nicolas, so Herman is henceforth called "Brother Lawrence."

SECOND PERIOD, 1651—1691.

THE LAY-BROTHER AMONG THE BARE-FOOTED CARMELITES IN PARIS.

We now come to the second period of Brother Lawrence's life (1651-1691), lived entirely in the monastery in Paris. In the beginning of his novitiate as a lay-brother, in the religious atmosphere of the cloister and shut off from the world, with its regular hours of worship, and its stated times of private meditation and prayer, he sets himself still more entirely and unceasingly to realize the Presence of God in all his waking moments throughout the day. He spends the times of private devotion in fixing his mind upon the existence of God ever present with him, rather than in studied reasonings, or elaborate meditations upon some passage of Holy Scripture.

Although, in order to test him, his superiors often gave him the roughest and commonest

work to do, he never complained, but went about it joyfully.

When the time for his profession came he did not hesitate for a moment in giving up to God without reserve a life already entirely devoted to Him and to His service.

Probably his poor education as a peasant, now that he was in middle life, unfitted him for the Priesthood in his Order, but whatever deficiencies debarred him from that, could not debar him from becoming the greatest saint among them all, and recognized as such, he remains simply the lay-brother Lawrence till his death in 1691.

It seems that on entering the Order he was put at once into the office of cook to the community. Lawrence does not like the work at all. It was not that the gentleman's footman was too proud to settle down to the duties of monastery cook. There was no pride of that sort in Brother Lawrence. He simply disliked cooking, and he never seems to have got to like it all the thirty years that he held the office.

We hear no more of his habit of breaking things. In his kitchen he would have the handling of plenty of metal pots and pans and wooden bowls; crockery and glass would not be much seen there, but there was

something that the brothers who worked under him in the kitchen soon came to see, and that was his saintly life, as well in his daily work as in his hours of devotion or times of recreation. They could not fail to notice that in the greatest hurry of business in the kitchen he still preserved his heavenly-mindedness, and his recollection of the Presence of God. They could not fail to see that he was never hasty or loitering, but that he did each duty in its season, with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquillity of spirit. "The time of business," said he, "does not, with me, differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling out for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were on my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."

When he began any business, he said to God in filial trust: "O my God, since Thou art with me, and I must now, in obedience to Thy commands, apply my mind to these outward things, I beseech Thee to grant me grace to continue in Thy Presence; and to this end, do Thou prosper me with Thine assistance, receive all my works, and possess all my affections." As he proceeded with his work, he continued this familiar conver-

sation with his Maker, imploring His grace, and offering to Him all his actions. When he had finished, he examined himself as to how he had discharged his duty: if he found *well*, he returned thanks to God; if otherwise, he asked pardon; and, without being discouraged, set his mind right again and continued his exercise of the Presence of God, as if he had never deviated from it. "Thus," he said, "by rising after my falls and by frequently renewed acts of faith and love, I have come to a state wherein it would be as difficult for me not to think of God as it was at first difficult to accustom myself to it."

It appears that Mr. Beaufort, Grand Vicar to the Cardinal de Noailles, then Archbishop of Paris, and formerly Bishop of Chalons, got to hear of Brother Lawrence's saintly life and came to the monastery to see him, and had four conversations with him. The first of these was on August 3, 1666, and the last is dated November 25, 1667. Mr. Beaufort had fortunately written down at the time what he remembered of these four conversations, which are invaluable to us since they open out the great secret of the lay-brother's daily life.

He tells Mr. Beaufort in the second of

these conversations on September 28, 1666, when he had been for fifteen years lay-brother and monastery cook, that he had been entrusted with two commissions. He had been sent one year (probably in the autumn of 1665) into Auvergne, and the next year (probably the early autumn of 1666) into Burgundy, to negotiate the purchase of the wine needed for the Order. He appears to have conducted the business well, or he would not have been sent a second time on a similar errand, but he did not like the work any more than his duties as cook. We may well suppose he would naturally shrink from exhibiting to the public gaze the ungainly movements of his lameness, and this was no mere excuse, for we read that having got the wine loaded in casks on board a boat to bring it down the Seine from Burgundy to Paris, he has to roll himself over the casks to get from one end of the boat to the other. But such matters did not really trouble him, he had long ago learned with S. Paul in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content. As in his cookery duties, so also on these two journeys he was doing God's work, he had God's Presence with him in the one as in the other, and nothing else mattered when he had got that.

In one of his conversations with Mr. Beaufort he said: "All consists in one hearty renunciation of everything which we feel does not lead us to God, in order that we may accustom ourselves to a continual conversation with Him without mystery and in simplicity."

He writes: "We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, for He regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed."

And again, in the same strain, he says that he found the most excellent method of going to God was that of doing our common business purely for the love of God.

And again in one of the Conversations: "The whole substance of religion is faith, hope, and love, by the practice of which we become united to the will of God. All things are possible to him who *believes*, they are less difficult to him who *hopes*, they are easier to him who *loves*, and still more easy to him who perseveres in the practice of these three virtues."

In another of his Conversations with Mr. Beaufort he told him that *useless thoughts* spoil all; that the mischief began there, and that we ought to be diligent in rejecting

such thoughts as soon as we see that they have nothing to do with this practice of the Presence and with helping on the work of our soul's salvation, and return at once to our communion with God.

He also said that all bodily mortifications and other exercises are useless, except so far as they really help us towards this union with God in the spirit of love; that he had well considered this, and had found that the shortest way was to go straight to God by a continual practice of love, or of doing everything for His sake.

He said that acts of the *understanding* were of comparatively little value, but that acts of the *will* were everything, and that our only business was to love and to delight ourselves in God.

We see that Brother Lawrence was intensely human; a man of like passions with us; he had his likes and dislikes, he liked neither the cooking nor the journeys for purchasing the wine, but he cheerfully did them both—the cooking for thirty long years—simply because he saw it was the work God had given him to do.

A similar instance of strong personal wish is recorded of him by that Mr. Beaufort who has given his recollections of the Con-

versations. One day Mr. Beaufort told him suddenly, without any previous warning, that a matter of great consequence to our lay-brother, one on which he had set his heart and long laboured for, could not be carried out as the heads of the community had decided against it. Though thus taken unawares, and off his guard, Brother Lawrence replied quite simply: "We must believe that they have good reasons for their decision, and our duty now is to obey, and say no more about it." He acted up to this himself, for though there were many occasions when the subject came up, he never again alluded to his disappointment at the decision that had been taken.

After thirty years of service as cook he had a large and painful ulcer in his leg; possibly resulting from a weakness left by his serious wound as a soldier in early life.

He spends some time in the infirmary of the monastery in Paris, and when he recovers is given other and lighter work, but we are not told what. It may well be that being now seventy years of age, the long time of standing at the cooking work was found to be too much for him, and he tells Mr. Beaufort in one of the Conversations that he had with him, that he likes his new post much better,

but that he was as ready to quit it as the former, since he was always finding pleasure in every condition by simply doing little things for the love of God.

We now come to the last ten years of Brother Lawrence's life, 1681 to 1691. During this period he wrote sixteen Letters which fortunately have been preserved. The first is dated June, 1682, and the last in February, 1691, within a week of his death. One of those is written to a person to whose opinion he says he shall always pay great deference, and for whom he has a very special esteem. He addresses him as "My Reverend Father," and in the end of his letter as "Your Reverence." One wonders whether it was the great Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai, who we know visited the lay-brother in a severe illness that he had. Three of the letters are addressed to Madame N., and the remaining twelve are written to one whom he addresses as "My Reverend and greatly honoured Mother," probably the Mother Superior of some Convent. He writes to explain to her his Practice of the Presence of God, and to urge her to follow and persevere in it. He also writes to console and encourage her under a long-continued illness.

It seems that in the course of these last

ten years he put together his little book of "Spiritual Maxims," as a help to those who came to consult him, and who wished to follow out his Practice, for now, at the age of seventy, his character for saintliness had become well known, and other people besides Mr. Beaufort came to ask his advice as to his Practice. They found him still as in former years the same humble, simple-hearted peasant lay-brother. If anyone really wished his spiritual counsel and advice he was glad to give them; but he had a wonderful shrewdness and insight into character by which he quickly discerned the motives of those who came to see him. If it was only idle curiosity he let them know that he would rather not see them again.

As a means towards progress and good result in this Practice of the Presence of God he says in the "Spiritual Maxims":

1. "The first thing is *a great purity of life*; in guarding ourselves with care lest we should do, or say, or think upon anything which might be displeasing to God, and when any such thing happens, in taking heed to repent thereof, humbly begging His forgiveness."

2. "The second is *a great faithfulness in the Practice of His Presence*, without allowing

any entrance to anxious cares and disquietude."

3. "Make it your study before taking up any task to look to God, be it only for a moment, as also when you are engaged therein, and lastly when you have performed the same. And forasmuch as this habit cannot be attained without time and great patience, be not disheartened at your many falls; truly this habit can only be formed with difficulty, yet when it is so formed, how great will be your joy therein!" And again:

"This Practice of the Presence of God is somewhat hard at the outset, yet if only pursued faithfully, it works imperceptibly most marvellous effects within the soul. It draws down God's grace abundantly and leads the soul insensibly to the ever-present Vision of God, loving and beloved."

Madame de Guyon tells us: "The unction of his words so impressed his hearers that they left him with a deep sense of the love of God and eagerly desiring to carry out the great truths he had just secretly taught them."

For study and meditation Brother Lawrence preferred the Holy Gospels above all other books.

All Scripture, we know, is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable under the Holy Spirit's teaching, for holy men of old spake, in these other books of the Bible, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; but in the Gospels Brother Lawrence felt, by a true spiritual instinct, that he had before him the words that above all others were spirit and life to his soul. It is interesting to know that half the words in the four Gospels are the words of Christ Himself. In reading those words we are indeed, like Mary of Bethany, sitting at *His* feet and hearing *His* words.

He said, on one occasion, that all the books in the famous academies and libraries of the world only grasped a little of that which the great book of Nature had to teach, and that he saw in the wonders of Nature marks of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the great Creator such as enraptured him with admiration, and lifted up his soul in transports of love and joy. This is an interesting remark when we recall that his conversion at the age of eighteen was caused by seeing the bare boughs of a tree in winter, and thinking of the power and wisdom and goodness that would clothe that tree with foliage in the coming spring.

As Brother Lawrence had found such

comfort and blessing in walking in the Presence of God, it was natural for him to recommend it earnestly to others. "Were I a preacher," he said, "I should preach it above all other things. Were I a 'director,' I should advise all the world to it; so necessary do I think it, and so easy." But his example was a stronger inducement than any arguments he could propose. His very countenance was edifying; such a sweet and calm devotion appearing in it, as could not but affect all beholders.

Besides the illness he had with the ulcer in his leg, it seems that he suffered from other and more severe attacks. He writes: "I have often been near expiring, though I was never so much satisfied as then. Accordingly I did not pray for any relief, but for strength to suffer bravely, meekly, lovingly. Ah! How sweet it is to suffer with God! We must watch continually over ourselves that we may not do or say or think anything that may displease Him. When our minds are thus filled with God, suffering will become full of sweetness, of unction, and of quiet joy."

In one of these illnesses the great and saintly Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai, came to visit him, and asked him which he should

choose, if God permitted him; whether to live a little longer to grow in holiness, or to be received at once into Heaven? The good Brother never hesitated. He replied that he would leave the choice to God; that as for himself, he had nothing else to do but to wait in peace till God should show him what was His will.

It is interesting to find that in the Archbishop's "Reflections for every day of the month" the one for the twenty-eighth day is on the Practice of the Presence of God; surely we may trace this to the influence of Brother Lawrence's life and example.

The good lay-brother was remarkable for the three great Christian virtues of Faith, Love, and Patience.

His was a simple, childlike faith that led him to leave himself and all that might happen to him entirely in God's hands. The more desperate things seemed, the greater was his trust in God. We are told: "He was like a rock beaten by the waves in the midst of the storm," as we have already seen in those inward struggles which he passed through in those ten first years of which we have spoken.

The great forces of Divine Love burned within him, and those around him often saw, without his knowing it, that his face was all

on fire with love to God. Speaking in his later years to the younger brothers, he would tell them with regret of the time he felt he had lost and wasted in his youth, and urged them to believe and reckon that all time is lost that is not spent in loving God. He told them that love to God, and love to our neighbour, were practically the same thing; the same indwelling spirit of love going forth naturally towards the one as towards the other. And he certainly practised this, for while he reminded the brothers how our Blessed Lord in the Gospels had said that He reckoned the least service done to one of the least of His brethren, as done to Himself, Brother Lawrence took particular care about any acts of service he was called on to render to the brothers, especially during those thirty years that he was in the kitchen. It was a pleasure to him to treat them as if they had been angels. He also attended as far as he could to the wants of the poor, consoling them in their afflictions, and helping them with his advice, and stirring them up to seek to gain Heaven at the same time as they worked for their daily bread.

And as to his patience. He certainly followed out the teaching of S. Paul: "Let patience have her perfect work." Madame

de Guyon tells us that, not to speak of a kind of sciatic gout that troubled him for many years, he had three great illnesses that God sent him in the last years of his life to prepare him for death, and to make him worthy of the reward that He had destined for him. In the first he confessed to the doctor a desire for death, in spite of all the remedies he might use. In the second he had another feeling of entire indifference whether he lived or died, being perfectly resigned to God's will; but in the third he showed a resignation, and an extraordinary joy, as he saw death approaching.

Four or five months before his death, in September, 1690, he had told several persons that he would die before the end of the following February, and this premonition came true.

Three months before his death, in one of his letters to "the Reverend Mother," he says: "In a little time I shall be going to God, I mean going to render my account to Him. What comforts me is that in this life *I see* God by faith, and indeed in such a manner as might make me say at times, '*No longer I believe—I see.*'"

He adds: "I do not know how God will dispose of me. I am always increasingly

happy. The whole world suffers, yet I, who deserve the severest discipline, experience joys so constant and so great, that I can scarce contain them. If God left me one moment to myself, I should be the most wretched man alive. And yet I know not how He can leave me alone, because faith gives me as strong a conviction as sense can do, and *I know that He never forsakes us till we have first forsaken Him.*"

He closes his last letter to the Reverend Mother, written at the age of eighty, on the Tuesday, only six days before his death, with these words: "I hope from His mercy the favour of seeing Him within a few days. Let us pray for one another."

Two days later, on the Thursday of that week, he took to his bed, and died on the following Monday, February 12, 1691.

Prepared by such a long and steadfastly devoted life, Brother Lawrence saw the approach of death without any disturbance of mind. His spirit of patience, great as it had been throughout the long life of eighty years, grew stronger as the end drew near. He was never in the least fretful during that last illness, though often racked with pain. His inward joy showed itself in his face, and still more in his speech, so much so that those

round his bed asked him whether he did not suffer. "Forgive me," he replied. "Yes, I do suffer; the pains in my side sore trouble me, but my spirit is happy and well content." They added, "Suppose God willed that you should suffer for ten years, what then?" "I would suffer," he answered, "not for ten years only, but till the Day of Judgment, if it were God's will, and I would hope that He would continue to aid me with His grace to bear it joyfully."

It may seem strange to us, but he had a great longing to suffer something for the love of that Blessed Lord and loving Saviour Who had suffered so much for him. We are reminded of the late Dean Gregory, Dean of S. Paul's, insisting on lying on his right side in his last illness, though he knew it was bad for him, and also painful, because he could hear better with his left ear, and he wanted to hear the bell chiming for service, in S. Paul's; so Brother Lawrence, finding on his death-bed an opportunity of suffering for his Lord, embraced it heartily. Purposely he bade the brothers around his bed to turn him on his right side, though he knew that that position gave him great pain. It seems that his pain came from pleurisy in his right side, and that it was so great that he would

have actually died under it, if the doctor had not happened to come in, and seeing what was the matter, changed him to his left side to relieve the breathing.

One of the brothers watching by his bedside, wished to do something to relieve him, but twice he answered, "I thank you, my dear brother, but I beg of you to let me bear just a little for the love of God." Often in the hour of pain he would cry out with fervour, "My God, I worship Thee in my infirmities. Now, now I shall have something to bear for Thee. Good, be it so, may I suffer and die with Thee." Then he would repeat those words of the fifty-first Psalm: "Create in me a clean heart, O God." "Cast me not away from Thy Presence." "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation."

As the hour of death drew on, he frequently exclaimed: "Oh, Faith, Faith!" His had indeed been a life of faith, a life "lived by faith in the Son of God Who died and gave Himself for him." He told a brother of the community that he hardly needed faith any longer to realize God present in his soul, for already faith was wellnigh swallowed up in sight. (It reminds us of some of his last words to the Reverend Mother, already quoted, and written, as we remember, only

three months before his death: "*No longer I believe—I see.*") He adds: "I feel what faith teaches us, and in that assurance, and that practice of faith, I will live and die with Him." These last words were indeed now finding their fulfilment. One might literally say that he braved death, for seeing the humble couch that they had prepared as his death-bed, he said: "Yes, it is true, that is my death-bed; but some one will follow me soon whom few expect." And this actually happened as he had predicted, for although one of the brothers, who was a very great friend of his, was at the time in seemingly perfect health, he fell ill next day, and died the same day that Brother Lawrence was buried, and was himself buried the following Wednesday in the same grave, and so the two friends were not separated in death.

So amazing was his boldness in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, from which so many shrink, that he told one who had asked him, that he feared neither death nor hell, neither the Judgment of God nor the attacks of the evil one.

His words were so full of comfort and grace, that many of the brothers questioned him. One of them asked him if he knew how terrible

a thing it is, even for the holiest of men, to fall into the Hands of the living God, inasmuch as no man, whoever he be, knows for certain whether he will be finally saved or not. "I agree," said Brother Lawrence, "but I do not wish to know it for fear of vanity. We can do nothing better than abandon ourselves to God."

After he had received the last Sacraments, a brother asked him if he were easy and what his mind was busied with. This was his reply: "I am doing what I shall do through all eternity—blessing God, praising God, adoring God, giving Him the love of my whole heart. It is our one business, my brothers, to worship Him and love Him, without thought of anything else."

One of the community having commended himself to Brother Lawrence's prayers, and having begged him to entreat of God for him the true spirit of prayer, he replied that there was need of labour on his part also, to make himself worthy of such a gift.

These were his last words. Next day, which was Monday, the 12th of February, 1691, at nine o'clock in the morning, without any pain or struggle, and without losing in the slightest the use of any of his faculties,

Brother Lawrence passed away in the embrace of his Lord, and rendered up his soul to God in the peace and calm of one who had just simply fallen asleep.

THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

It might be asked, What has been my object in drawing this rough sketch of Brother Lawrence's life? It has been simply because I believe he had found out, two and a half centuries ago, the true secret of the higher spiritual life, and that this secret is as suitable for our daily life in the world in this twentieth century as it was for him in the religious life of a monastery in the seventeenth.

It might be further asked, What has convinced me of the supreme importance of this Practice for ourselves to-day? To answer this second question I must ask the reader's indulgence while I give one or two personal reminiscences.

From notes that I have kept I see that I spoke about this Practice of the Presence of God to my own people in a parish in the

West of England, on Ash Wednesday, 1910, as one of the ways of trying to improve that coming season of Lent in drawing nearer to God. I spoke about Brother Lawrence and read an extract from a letter by our own Bishop of Bath and Wells (Bishop Kennion), which he had written to his Diocese in the February number of the Bath and Wells "Diocesan Gazette" for the year 1910. The passage in the letter is so important that I quote it here:

"Let there be a determined and continuous effort to realize the constant Presence of God. Wise men of old have said much of the powerful influence of this effort. The Rev. B. P. Bull tells of a young drummer boy in a well-known Regiment (which I refrain from indicating), whose sense of this Presence was so strong that his life in consequence of it became one of extraordinary influence for good among men and boys of his regiment.

"How such a sense would affect our personal, social, and political life need scarcely be pointed out. Certainly all our ideals would become nobler, and our aims higher. Few ways of guarding against sin are so efficacious as is this constant recollection. No happiness becomes greater than this. No schemes for

self-improvement are operative as this is. For it destroys self-consciousness—that *bête noire* of many a one who is endeavouring to follow Christ. Let then the apprehension of the Presence of God be your special effort this Lent. If gained you will not lightly part with it: and the very effort after it is in itself a gain: for all the way to Heaven is Heaven.

"Simplicity is essential to this, and simplicity of character will grow in you, as you honestly make the effort of thinking 'God is here.'"

About three years ago now, I wrote to the conductor of a Retreat for Clergy that I was going to, to ask him whether in one of his Meditations in Retreat he could give us some help as to the way in which the Practice of a monk in a monastery 250 years ago could be applied to the life and ministry of a country vicar in a parish in the present day. His reply was so helpful that I quote from it:

"I don't know that there is anything more to be said about the Practice of the Presence of God than is contained in the Conversations and Letters of Brother Lawrence. The theory of course is simple enough: it is only perseverance in the Practice

that is difficult, and I do not know that present-day conditions make any difference. It ought, perhaps, to be easier in the country than in the town with its noise and greater distractions :

" Regularity of Life,

" The Daily Meditation,

" Spiritual Reading,

" Ejaculatory Prayer,

" The effort to keep oneself calm and quiet,

" To drop useless and distracting trains of thought.

" All these ought to be helps disposing us to that habitual recollection which is a gift of God. We must pray for it, and try to fit ourselves for it by perseverance in whatever practice we have found helpful."

I think that the advice in this letter is very much to the point. The six things mentioned are of great importance. I have interpreted " Spiritual Reading " and " Dropping useless and distracting trains of thought " to include the giving up reading books that are not in some way or other, directly or indirectly, helpful to the spiritual life, and for about three years have followed this advice, I believe with good result. Of course one need not bar newspapers, because, as Spurgeon said, " It is useful to us to see how

God is dealing with His own world"; but newspaper reading might in many cases be curtailed with spiritual advantage.

The letter mentions "Ejaculatory Prayer." This is surely one of the greatest helps; such prayer to be "out loud," whenever and wherever possible. Nehemiah is of course the classical instance of such prayer and of its speedy answer. It is, in fact, when used silently, a kind of *spiritual wireless telegraphy* by which the human spirit in man is put in connexion with, and in communion with, the great Divine Spirit, God Himself; and when our hearts are "tuned up" to the true spirit of prayer, such as the Practice of the Presence of God produces in us, messages between the human and the Divine Spirit can at any time be sent and answer received.

Another helpful practice is that of addressing God in prayer as "My Father," or "My Heavenly Father." The word "God" presents to our minds a Being far above us, and out of our sight, while the word "Father" suggests at once an endearing relationship, and reminds us constantly of our having been adopted in Holy Baptism as children of this Heavenly Father, and in this spirit of adoption we cry "Abba," "Father," as our Blessed Lord has taught us to do in the pat-

tern prayer He Himself gave us. It is significant in this connexion to remember that our Blessed Lord, as a Man, practised perfectly moment by moment this realization of the Presence of His Father all through His life on earth, and that in what we call the "Dereliction on the Cross," when for the first and only time in His whole life our Lord in the Passion lost the sense of the Father's Presence, He cries, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken ME?" while His first and last words from the Cross, like His prayers at other times, are addressed "Father": "Father, forgive them . . ." "Father, into Thy Hands . . ."

Since writing the above I have come across, in the late Bishop of Ripon's helpful book, "The Communion of Prayer," a quotation from the writings of the Rev. Dr. Jowett, which exactly expresses what I mean:

"My Father, may I walk as Thy child to-day! May the sense of my relationship to Thee fill me with a saving self-respect! May my life be as glorious as my relationship! May I walk as the child of God."

The conductor of another Retreat that I went to, said in one of his meditations, as I find in my notes, words to this effect:

"The Presence of their Risen Lord with

those two disciples walking to Emmaus was deeply interesting at the time, making their hearts burn within them, but it was only afterwards that they knew that it was really His Presence which they had been privileged to enjoy—so the Presence of God should be taken as a matter of course for the Christian life by His children, even though they may have no special perception of it. Do not be troubled as to any feeling or marked realization of it. Jacob awoke and said, 'Surely God is in this place and I knew it not'; and God had been there as his dream had shown him."

Again I ask the reader's indulgence for making these personal allusions, but I did not see how to urge the supreme importance of this Practice of the Presence of God without giving the reasons that had brought me to this conclusion.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE PRACTICE.

It would astonish most people to see from a list of quotations how every school of religious thought in the Christian Church has held and striven after this Practice—possibly under different names, but really the same thing—from a Roman Catholic Carmelite monk, such as Brother Lawrence, to a Protestant and Evangelical Christian hymn-writer, such as William Cowper, writing:

> "O for a closer walk with God."

And in those other well-known lines:

> "For Thou, within no walls confined,
> Inhabitest the humble mind;
> Such ever bring Thee when they come,
> And going, take Thee to their home."

If that is not practising the Presence of God, I do not know what is.

Then, further, this Practice is the privilege of all God's many children of every kindred and nation and people and tongue—whether high or low, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, from a God-fearing and clever statesman like Daniel, to a simple, "unlearned and ignorant" Apostle like S. Thomas saying, "My Lord and My God"—from the sweet Psalmist of Israel, breathing out his soul-longings for that Presence in scores of instances, to the simple-hearted English cottager of Cowper's verse who

"Just knows and only knows her Bible true."

From the holy Simeon, and Anna the prophetess, coming into the Temple at the Purification to find the Infant Christ present there, to Francis Thompson, our modern poet, utterly destitute and passing winter nights starving and in rags on a seat on the Thames Embankment, too poor to pay a copper or two for a night's lodging, and yet even under such adverse circumstances realizing a ladder

"Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross,"

with God's Presence for him, as for the

patriarch of old; and more definitely still as he looks at the muddy lamp-lit water flowing silently under those bridges, a nearer and more definite Presence of

> "Christ walking on the water,
> Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!"

So that if we ourselves to-day desire to live constantly in the Presence of God—

> "We need not bid for cloistered cell
> Our neighbour and the world farewell."

We may realize that Presence anywhere, at any time of the day or night, not only in our churches, but also in our homes—like Brother Lawrence in his kitchen—or at our daily work in business office, or behind the shop counter; as also in the crowded streets of our towns and cities—on the top of a 'bus, or in a railway train, or standing at night on the deck of a steamship crossing the ocean, as well as in the quiet woods and lanes of the countryside—wherever and whenever it be—OURSELVES, ALONE WITH GOD.

We are told that the test of a Church doctrine is that it should have been accepted

as a part of the Christian Faith, as being, "quod semper, ubique, et ab omnibus"—"What (has been held) always, everywhere, and by all." Surely we may claim this for the Practice of the Presence of God when we find it—

In the Bible—From Genesis to Revelation.

In the Church—In the lives of her martyrs and saints, as also in those of ordinary Christian men and women.

In all ages of human history—From Adam downwards, as well under the Patriarchal as under the Jewish and Christian dispensations.

In all countries of the world—Among the Esquimaux amid Arctic snows, as among negro races in Equatorial heat.

In all schools of Christian thought—In the Eastern Churches as in the Western—and in the West among Roman, Anglican, and Protestant alike.

And, further, among all classes of minds—Whether we instance the deep thinker of Europe, or the learned and contemplative Hindu convert, as well as among the simple rough cowboys of Canada, or the uneducated Maories of New Zealand.

Surely then it is our duty—nay, rather our privilege—to claim and to practice, now,

to-day, as part of our inheritance as God's adopted children, the full and hourly realization of Christ's own word of promise:

"Lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD."

EPILOGUE.

THE SPECIAL NEED FOR THE PRACTICE IN THE PRESENT DAY.

I CANNOT in this little book go into the subject of the special Presence of God in our Churches, whether with or without a service; as also of a further special Presence of Christ's glorified Humanity in our Service of Holy Communion. It would open up two or three lines of thought and study, partly also controversial, for which there is not room in these pages.

I can only add in conclusion that I want to plead that all who realize God's claim upon their lives for His service, should definitely and of set purpose make our lay-brother's aim their rule of life, using the same name for it as he did. We so often talk vaguely and to little practical purpose of "walking with God," but if we set before ourselves the definite object of practising

this realization of God's Presence moment by moment throughout the day, it must lead to our growth in holiness.

Surely we are put into this world not merely to learn to believe certain truths and to "get saved," but for the definite formation and building up of Christian character, and this Practice of our lay-brother is the best means toward such character formation.

We need this Practice for ourselves as well as for our influence on others in the world around.

We need it for ourselves. In these days of anxiety and nerve strain after four long years of war—in the state of tension and restlessness all around us, we want more than ever to realize the meaning of such words: as "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength"; "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

And how are we to get and maintain this strength and this peace? There is no better way than by living in the Presence of God.

Having once got this strength and peace in our own lives and characters, the sweet spices of its influence must and will spread to those around. And this is of the utmost importance.

I want especially in these critical days to plead that *every ounce* of definite Christian character is needed to be thrown into the scale of Public Opinion that will have to settle in the coming Reconstruction—now, after the war—various problems, moral, social, economic, political, religious, national and international, that will have to be solved when at last peace is declared. Every Christian man, woman, and child, however humble their position in life, has his or her share in forming public opinion. Every ounce of Christian influence tells. Brother Lawrence was no genius, and no scholar; his was not a life lived in the public eye, but the influence of his sanctity made itself felt outside the walls of his monastery, and persons of eminent sanctity came to visit him and to learn his secret.

And, further, there is also the equally important bearing of this Practice on the subject of Home Re-union. If, as we have seen, it is the rightful heritage of all God's children of every Church and Denomination of Christians, it surely, if really followed out, would work wonders in drawing together Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical in our own Church of England, and also Nonconformist Protestants of our various Denominations.

And if it would have this effect upon that Home Re-union which is so much in the air at this time, as the Practice is also world-wide, it ought to have a similar effect in hastening on that wider Re-union of all the Churches of Christendom—the Eastern Churches as well as the Western—and we should see the dawn of that Day for which our Blessed Lord prayed: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

WHAT A POWER A UNITED CHURCH IN ENGLAND WOULD BE IN MAKING THE WHOLE NATION REALLY CHRISTIAN!

WHAT A POWER A UNITED CHRISTENDOM WOULD BE FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD!

I add here seven quotations, six in verse and one in prose, from authors, some definitely Catholic, and some as distinctly Protestant, and written in different centuries, to emphasize the world-wide universality of this Practice of the Presence of God.

SEVEN QUOTATIONS.

1. Metrical Version of Ps. cxxxix., verses 1–11, by Mary, Countess of Pembroke. 1586 A.D.

2. A letter of Fénelon, Archbishop of Cambrai. 1651–1715.

3. The Hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour," by Annie Sherwood Hawks. 1872.

4. A Poem, "The Second Crucifixion," by Richard le Gallienne.

5. The Hymn, "Abide with Me! Fast Falls the Eventide," by the Rev. Henry Francis Lyte.

6. A Poem, "Christ in Flanders," reprinted from the "Spectator," of September 11th, 1915.

7. A Poem, "Come to Me, Belovèd, Babe of Bethlehem," by Digby Mackworth Dolben. 1848–1867.

MARY HERBERT, Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621), was the third daughter of Sir Henry Sidney. Sir Philip Sidney was her eldest brother. She was well educated, and had learnt Greek and Latin and Hebrew. Her brother, Sir Philip, was her constant companion in her childhood. In 1577 she married Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke, and went to live at Witton in Wiltshire, where her first child, William, the third Earl of Pembroke, was born. At Witton her favourite brother, Sir Philip Sidney, engaged with her in literary work. Among other works, they completed before his death in 1586 a metrical version of the Psalms; Sir Philip undertaking Psalms i.–xliii., and the Countess the far larger part, Psalms xliv.–cl. Dr. Donne, Dean of S. Paul's (whose life, thanks to Izaak Walton, we are familiar with), in his book of Poems published in 1635, speaks highly of this Version of the Psalms. The Countess died September 25th, 1621, and was buried beside her husband in Salisbury Cathedral. An

epitaph of twelve lines describes her as "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother."

QUOTATION ON PSALM CXXXIX. VERSES 1–11.

O Lord, in me there lieth naught
But to Thy search revealèd lies;
For when I sit
Thou markest it;
No less Thou notest when I rise;
Yea, closest closet of my thought
Hath open windows to Thine eyes.

Thou walkest with me when I walk;
When to my bed for rest I go,
I find Thee there
And everywhere:
Not youngest thought in me doth grow,
No, not one word I cast to talk,
But, yet unuttered, Thou dost know.

If forth I march, Thou go'st before;
If back I turn, Thou com'st behind;
So forth nor back
Thy guard I lack.
Nay, on me too Thy hand I find.
Well I Thy wisdom may adore
But never reach with earthy mind.

To shun Thy notice, leave Thine eye,
O whither might I take my way ?
To starry sphere ?
Thy throne is there.
To dead men's undelightsome stay ?
There is Thy walk, and there to lie
Unknown in vain I should assay.

O Sun, whom light nor flight can match,
Suppose thy lightful flightful wings
Thou lend to me
And I could flee
As far as thee the evening brings :
Ev'n led to West He would me catch,
Nor should I lurk with Western things.

Do thou thy best, O secret Night,
In sable veil to cover me :
Thy sable veil
Shall vainly fail ;
With day unmasked my night shall be ;
For night is day, and darkness light,
O Father of all lights, to Thee.

ARCHBISHOP FÉNELON (François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon) (1651–1715), was born at the Château de Fénelon, in Perigord, France, August 6th, 1651. Trained in the Seminary of S. Sulpice, he received Holy Orders in 1675, and for the next ten years held the office of Superior of the Community of Nouvelles Catholiques. Later in 1695 he was appointed Archbishop of Cambrai. He took a leading part in the controversy about Madame de Guyon's book on Quietism, which led to a quarrel with his friend Bossuet, the great French preacher. He was condemned at Rome, and banished from Court for the line he took in this controversy, and in consequence spent the last sixteen years of his life in works of Christian piety and charity in his own diocese, where he was much beloved, visiting familiarly the houses of the poorest peasants under his charge, and hospitably receiving wounded officers as guests at his palace. He was remarkable for the beauty of his character, and his gentle spirit of mystic devotion. As a writer he

left prose works of a high order. His "Letters and Reflections" is a very useful book of devotion. He died January 17th, 1715.

REFLECTION ON THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

"Walk before Me, and be thou perfect."—GEN. xvii. 1.

"These are the words of God to faithful Abraham. Whoever walks in Thy presence, O Lord, is in the path to perfection. We never depart from this holy way, but we lose sight of Thee, and cease to behold Thee in everything. Alas! where shall we go when we no longer see Thee—Thee Who art our light, and the only goal to which our steps should tend? To have our eyes fixed on Thee in every step we take, is our only security that we shall never go astray. Faith! beaming with light amidst the darkness that surrounds us, I behold thee with thy look of holy love and trust, leading man to perfection. O God, I will fix my eyes on Thee; I will behold Thee in everything that is around me. The order of Thy providence shall arrest my attention. My

heart shall still see Thee in the midst of the busy cares of life, in all its duties, all its concerns; for they shall all be fulfilled in obedience to Thy will. 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.'

"In vain does our own foresight strive to escape the snares that surround us: danger comes from below, but deliverance only from on high. Temptations are without and within us: we should be lost, O Lord, without Thee. To Thee I raise my eyes, upon Thee I rest my heart; my own weakness frightens me. Thy all-powerful mercy will support my infirmity."

ANNIE SHERWOOD HAWKS.

ANNIE SHERWOOD was born in Horsick, New York, in 1835. She married a Mr. Hawks and lived for many years at Brooklyn, where she wrote hymns for various popular Sunday School hymn-books. "I need Thee every hour," is in the Methodist Hymn-book. It was written in April, 1872. It breathes the Practice of the Presence of God in every line, though written by an authoress miles away from Brother Lawrence in general religious thought and feeling.

I need Thee every hour,
  Most gracious Lord ;
No tender voice like Thine
  Can peace afford.

I need Thee every hour ;
  Stay Thou near by :
Temptations lose their power
  When Thou art nigh.

I need Thee every hour,
In joy or pain ;
Come quickly and abide,
Or life is vain.

I need Thee every hour ;
Teach me Thy will ;
And Thy rich promises
In me fulfil.

I need Thee every hour,
Most Holy One ;
O make me Thine indeed,
Thou blessed Son !

Richard le Gallienne. Man of letters and journalist, born at Liverpool in 1866. He became literary critic to a London newspaper. Among other works he has brought out two or three volumes of poems. In his poem, "The Second Crucifixion," which is included in "The Oxford Book of English Verse," he describes in five verses five separate taunts against Christ and Christianity by which the "Loud mockers in the roaring street" are crucifying Christ afresh in the present century. He closes each verse with the answer of the true Christian heart to each of the profane taunts in turn. Each answer is based upon the Practice of the Presence of God.

THE SECOND CRUCIFIXION.

Loud mockers in the roaring street
  Say Christ is crucified again;
Twice pierced His gospel-bearing feet,
  Twice broken His great heart in vain.

I hear, and to myself I smile,
For Christ talks with me all the while.

No angel now to roll the stone
From off His unawaking sleep,
In vain shall Mary watch alone,
In vain the soldiers vigil keep.

Yet while they deem my Lord is dead
My eyes are on His shining head.

Ah ! never more shall Mary hear
That voice exceeding sweet and low
Within the garden calling clear :
Her Lord is gone, and she must go.

Yet all the while my Lord I meet
In every London lane and street.

Poor Lazarus shall wait in vain,
And Bartimæus still go blind ;
The healing hem shall ne'er again
Be touched by suffering humankind.

Yet all the while I see them rest,
The poor and outcast, on His breast.

No more unto the stubborn heart
With gentle knocking shall He plead,
No more the mystic pity start,
For Christ twice dead is dead indeed.

So in the street I hear men say,
Yet Christ is with me all the day.

HENRY FRANCIS LYTE (1793–1847). Lyte's "Abide with me," written on the subject of the eventide of life, is now known all the world over as the favourite among our evening hymns. Composed at his vicarage of Lower Brixham in Devon, on the last Sunday he officiated there, September 4th, 1847, and only a few weeks before his death. It seems unnecessary to quote a hymn so well known, but I cannot leave it out, as it realizes so fully the Presence of God "every passing hour." And I cannot mutilate its perfection by quoting only a verse or two, so I give the whole original hymn of eight verses, only five of which are printed in most hymn-books.

Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou, Who changest not, abide with me!

Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word;
But, as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me!

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings;
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea;
Come, Friend of sinners, and abide with me!

Thou on my head in early youth didst smile;
And, though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee,
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.

I need Thy Presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, Grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes !
Shine through the gloom, and point me to
the skies !
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain
shadows flee ;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

I do not know who the author of the following poem is; he only signs himself "L. W." I am most grateful to the editor of the "Spectator" for permission to quote this early War poem. It first appeared in the "Spectator" on September 11th, 1915.

CHRIST IN FLANDERS.

We had forgotten You, or very nearly—
You did not seem to touch us very nearly—
Of course we thought about You now and then;
Especially in any time of trouble—
We knew that You were good in time of trouble—
But we are very ordinary men.

And there were always other things to think of—
There's lots of things a man has got to think of—
His work, his home, his pleasure, and his wife;
And so we only thought of You on Sunday—
Sometimes, perhaps, not even on a Sunday—
Because there's always lots to fill one's life.

And all the while, in street or lane or byway—
In country lane, in city street, or byway—
You walked among us, and we did not see.
Your Feet were bleeding as You walked our pavements—
How *did* we miss Your Footprints on our pavements ?—
Can there be other folk as blind as we ?

Now we remember ; over here in Flanders—
(It isn't strange to think of You in Flanders)—
This hideous warfare seems to make things clear.
We never thought about You much in England—
But now that we are far away from England—
We have no doubts, we know that You are here.

You helped us pass the jest along the trenches—
Where, in cold blood, we waited in the trenches—
You touched its ribaldry and made it fine.
You stood beside us in our pain and weakness—
We're glad to think You understand our weakness—
Somehow it seems to help us not to whine.

We think about You kneeling in the Garden—
Ah! God! the agony of that dread Garden—
We know You prayed for us upon the Cross.
If anything could make us glad to bear it—
'Twould be the knowledge that You willed to bear it—
Pain—death—the uttermost of human loss.

Though we forgot You—You will not forget us—
We feel so sure that You will not forget us—
But stay with us until this dream is past.
And so we ask for courage, strength, and pardon—
Especially, I think, we ask for pardon—
And that You'll stand beside us to the last.

L. W.

Digby Mackworth Dolben (1848–1867). I have kept my favourite poem of all to the last. It is indeed wonderful that he should have written it when at school at Eton in 1864 at the age of sixteen. His was a truly devout soul, of singular purity of heart. Always delicate and frail, he fainted away in the examination for matriculation at Oxford. What might he not have written had not his brief life come to a sudden close through heart failure while bathing at the early age of nineteen! Further comment on the poem is unnecessary, it speaks for itself.

HOMO FACTUS EST.

Come to me, Belovèd,
  Babe of Bethlehem;
Lay aside Thy Sceptre
  And Thy Diadem.

Come to me, Belovèd ;
Light and healing bring ;
Hide my sin and sorrow
Underneath Thy wing.

Bid all fear and doubting
From my soul depart,
As I feel the beating
Of Thy Human Heart.

Look upon me sweetly
With Thy Human Eyes,
With Thy Human Finger
Point me to the skies.

Safe from earthly scandal,
My poor spirit hide
In the utter stillness
Of Thy wounded Side.

Guide me, ever guide me,
With Thy piercèd Hand,
Till I reach the borders
Of the pleasant land.

Then, my own Belovèd,
Take me home to rest ;
Whisper words of comfort ;
Lay me on Thy Breast.

Show me not the Glory
Round about Thy Throne ;
Show me not the flashes
Of Thy jewelled Crown.

Hide me from the pity
Of the Angels' Band.
Who ever sing Thy praises,
And before Thee stand.

Hide me from the glances
Of the Seraphin,
They, so pure and spotless,
I, so stained with sin.

Hide me from S. Michael
With his flaming sword:—
Thou canst understand me,
O my Human Lord !

Jesu, my Belovèd,
Come to me alone ;
In Thy sweet embraces
Make me all Thine own.

By the quiet waters,
Sweetest Jesu, lead ;
'Mid the virgin lilies,
Purest Jesu, feed.

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Only Thee I seek,
Thou, the Man Christ Jesus,
Strength in flesh made weak.

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